

Severe Weather Safety Away From Home

A detailed home tornado safety plan won't help you much if you're away from home when a tornado threatens. It is important to think about what you will do if a tornado threatens you while you're away from home - at work, church, school, while shopping, dining out, on vacation or participating in outdoor activities. The danger is higher when you're away from home, when you may be unfamiliar with the area and away from your usual sources of weather information. It is important for business owners, and those responsible for safety in all types of public buildings and venues, to think about and plan for tornado safety for all employees, occupants and potential visitors.

Type of Notice	What It Means	You Should...
Hazardous Weather Outlook	Will there be severe thunderstorms or tornadoes today or tonight, or several days from now?	If severe weather is expected, check back for later forecasts, information and possible watches.
Tornado or Severe Thunderstorm Watch	There's a good chance of large hail, damaging winds, and maybe even a tornado in the watch area within the next few hours.	If the watch includes your county, or one close to you, you should really start to pay attention to what's going on. If there are storms nearby, check your weather source to see if there are warnings.
Severe Thunderstorm Warning	A storm with large damaging hail and/or damaging winds has been seen, or indicated on radar.	Listen closely to the warning - it will tell you what exactly to expect (hail size and wind speed).
Tornado Warning	A tornado has either been seen, or there are signs on radar that a tornado could be forming.	If you're in the warning area, NOW is the time to put your safety plan into action.

Hotels and Motels

Think about tornado safety in hotels and motels. Some lodging establishments have safety plans for guests. Some establishments suggest guests seek shelter in hallways. However, people should remember to avoid open hallways - hallways that have doors and/or windows on either end. These can become wind tunnels and send debris flying down the corridor. Interior bathrooms and closets near the center of the building may be good shelters in this situation. Again, wherever you are forced to seek shelter in a tornado, cover up with pillows, heavy blankets or whatever you can find.

Outdoor Activities - Campgrounds, RV Parks, Sporting Events, Fairs, Festivals

Being exposed outdoors is one of the worst places to be in a tornado or severe thunderstorm. Being involved in outdoor activities can sometimes put you at increased risk, because you're exposed outdoors and possibly in an unfamiliar area. Organized outdoor events, including sporting events at all times of the year, should have weather safety plans. People at large sporting events are especially vulnerable because of the difficulties involved in moving large numbers of people. Event coordinators or managers should have a detailed severe weather safety plan in place and practice it. People at large outdoor gatherings or events should listen when severe weather information is conveyed and follow instructions if a safety plan is put into action.

Public Buildings - Malls, Stores, Restaurants, Hospitals

The same basic tornado safety guidelines apply in any public building, whether it's your local shopping mall, a hospital or nursing home, a grocery or discount store, a church, a hotel, convenience store, truck stop or restaurant.

GET IN: put as many walls between you and the outside as possible

GET DOWN: if you can't get underground, get as low as possible

COVER UP: use whatever you have to protect your head and body from flying objects

If a tornado threatens, you should not leave in your car! However, being in a sturdy building is most likely safer than being in your vehicle on the road if a tornado hits. Stay calm and try to find a safe shelter wherever you are.

BLUE EARTH COUNTY



FOR MORE INFORMATION, please contact BLUE EARTH COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT at (507) 304-4806